

Impact Statement

Adriana Herrera, Grade 12.

Capturing the Sun's Collapse, 2018.

Graphite, pencil, watercolor on paper, 29 x 21 Inches.

Cypress Springs High School, Cypress, TX

Unsung Hero: Yōsuke Yamahata

Throughout history, there has been many triumphs and success in technology and in a culture as a whole. Yet, unfortunately there has been many tragedies as well, especially in the loss of human lives, taken by the very technology which has been created to serve man and his purposes. But from these tragedies arises a person of good nature and good intentions, for their purpose in such hopeless situations is to aid the people affected by it. A hero can come in many forms though, and in most cases that is what the majority of people fail to see. And from this, an unacknowledged or an unsung hero is born, for in this case a man named Yōsuke Yamahata went unnoticed in his good actions.

Yōsuke is a Japanese photographer, part of the Japanese military. He was born on August 6, 1917, in Singapore and died April 18, 1996. From an early age, he had been exposed to photography by his father who had a job in Singapore. And from there he had become and maintained being a photographer.

On August 10 of 1945, he travelled to Nagasaki in Japan. This was just the day after the bombing of Nagasaki by the Americans. There he discovered a horrific site to which many were injured with burns and other wounds made from the radiation of the bomb and debris from it, but the majority of the population in that area had died. But despite being in such a tragic environment of death and destruction, he maintained his calmness and composure. Such an event of significant travesty was too much to comprehend at that very moment. To which the only thing he could do for the people of Nagasaki, the ones who had survived, was to photograph this moment of trauma. He took hundreds of photos, around 250 of different photos of people and sites in Nagasaki in just about a day and finished taking them by late afternoon. Afterward, his photos after just two weeks got published and appeared in the newspaper of Japan called the Mainichi Shinbun. There it was exposed to Japan and the world what the aftermath was caused by the atomic bombs that had been dropped upon Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Such an action has gone unnoticed, and this is the partial reason as to why I wished to depict what he had done. He risked his life in a way that he could and may have been exposed to radiation as he had taken the pictures of the sites there and people freshly the day after the bombing. The importance of taking the photos of the devastating aftermath of the bombing, and especially of the victim of it is that it exposes what crimes humanity had committed upon other human beings. These photographs show and had made people aware of what effects the atomic bomb had. In that it had exposed the monster that had been unleashed upon the world. It showed how this monster, this bomb, can take the lives of many in just one swipe. This awareness that these photos had conjured has made people all over the world remember this tragedy, in that it keeps history from repeating an avoidable destructive choice. His photos

remind people, as they are still relevant today that such a technological destructive weapon cannot be used ever again, as many innocent lives are at stake of being taken.

All these things can be and are depicted through this art piece. I had chosen to use graphite as to bring about a nostalgic or old look to it as to represent the era of the world wars and its photos of that time. The faces are of the ones, the victims, or represent the ones he had taken in the aftermath of the bomb. He himself in the drawing is holding his camera, and a little girl is in front of it as to represent the innocent souls that had no control in the decision of the bomb. She and the other faces are the victims of the war.